

Understanding your spiritual resources in Christ

Karl Buchan - Smith / General

Ephesians, Lock down sermons

Understanding your spiritual resources in Christ

Introduction

Ignorance of the gospel is eternally fatal.

And lack of understanding the resources you have in Christ can be fatal to your Christian walk.

The lack of understanding your resources in Christ can be:

- the difference between walking the victorious Christian life vs failing dismally.
- the difference between living with hope vs living in despair
- the difference between knowing you belong vs feeling alone
- the difference between victory over demonic attack vs being paralysed in fear.
- the difference between walking like the world vs walking like Christ.

- the difference between devastated by trials vs growing Christ-likeness and dependence in them.

Historical Background to our passage Eph 1:15-23

Our passage is a prayer of Paul.

It is the second of 8 long sentences in this epistle comprising 169 words.

1:3–14, 15–23; 2:1–7; 3:2–13, 14–19; 4:1–6, 11–16; 6:14–20

The longest sentence in the bible is all about praising God for His blessing of spiritual resources to the believer, 2nd is prayer to understand these resources.

In 1:3-14 Paul teaches the resources the believers have in Christ and then in vs 15-23 prays that the believers would understand it.

In Chap 2:1-3:14 he teaches what the believer has in Christ, salvation, peace in the body of Christ and in 3:14 -19 he prays that the believers would understand these truths.

In Chap 4 on-wards he begins to teach how believers are to walk in light of these truths.

If you do not understand these truths then you cannot walk in the light of these truths.

Doctrine is critical for practice. BUT

Lack of understanding is fatal to practice.

Proposition

Do you fully understand the resources you have in Christ Jesus?

Paul prayed that believers would understand the resources they have in Christ so that they can practically apply it in their lives.

2 Truths to help you understand your resources in Jesus to walk like Him

1. You need to be in Christ to walk like Him
2. You need divine help to walk like Him

To comprehend the resources, you have in Christ requires the HS to reveal it and providing the wisdom, the practical discernment in how to practically apply these principles in your life.

But before you can utilise the HS, you first need to have the HS, which means you need to be a believer.

This brings me to the first point

1. You need to be in Christ to walk in him

Paul writes:

Ephesians 1:15–16 ESV

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

Paul is in prison and had not been ministering in Ephesus for at least 4 years.

For this reason, vs 15

Refers back both to the spiritual blessings every believer has in Christ described in vs 3-14 and to the news Paul heard of the believers mentioned in vs 15

Epaphras likely had shared the news of spiritual condition of the believers in Ephesus and surrounding churches with Paul in prison.

We read.

because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, vs 15

Paul had heard of the readers true saving faith in Jesus.

They were saved by repenting and trusting Jesus's death for their sins on the cross and His resurrection.

Previously they had worshipped and trusted in the nature goddess Artemis, Diana, called the mother of life, the unattainable virgin goddess, that had renounced Marriage.

But now they had turned away from idolatry to depend upon Jesus as Saviour and commit their lives to Him as Lord.

Since they were believers, the spiritual resources Paul mentioned in vs 3-14 were true of them.

They had been chosen, predestined to be adopted, redeemed, forgiven, included in God's universal plan and sealed by the HS as a guarantee of their inheritance.

And as believers, their relationship with their fellow believers was transformed into loving relationships.

A genuine mark of true salvation is a love for the saints.

A sacrificial kind of love. Defined:

The attitude of selfless sacrifice that results in acts of kindness done to others
(MacArthur)

Not just feelings or words but self-denial to perform actual acts of kindness and care.

1 Corinthians 13:2 ESV

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Faith without love makes you a monk, isolated in your Christian monastery.

Quick to show the heresies of others, but missing the ingredient of love.

Doctrinal orthodoxy is no substitute for the love of Christ and fellow believers.

Sadly, in Rev 2:1-7 John wrote how the Church at Ephesus had embraced orthodox doctrine but abandoned their first love of Christ.

These were still early days, Paul had heard that they were genuinely saved, and were demonstrating love for their fellow believers.

This motivated Paul's ongoing gratefulness.

**I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers
16a**

Paul prayer life demonstrated thankfulness continually.

Even though Paul was in prison, he was not captivated by his trial, but was rather

was worshipping, praying and giving thanks thinking about God and fellow believers.

Application

1. Some of you this morning, listening to this sermon, may not as yet trusted Christ as Saviour and Lord.

May urge you to follow the example of like the believers in Ephesus, to turn away from your idols, to turn away from the world, to turn away from self and to turn to Jesus Christ.

Christ death and resurrection, 2000 years ago in Jerusalem was the pinnacle of History, the defining point spiritually for mankind.

It is also your defining point.

Will you turn to Jesus?

Will you repent of your sins?

Will you trust Jesus as your saviour and lord?

May I encourage you even now, to pause this video, to ask this question.

Have I trusted in Christ as my Saviour and Lord or not?

If not acknowledge your sin to God, and ask Jesus to show you Mercy, to save you, to give you the gift of repentance and faith.

If you know that you are a believer, then simply ask, are you still trusting Him despite your circumstances?

Trust Him, follow Christ's example and choose to love your fellow brothers and sisters.

Pick up those phones, reach out to your fellow believers and demonstrate sacrificial loving acts of kindness.

2. You need divine help to walk like Him

Paul prayed asking God to give them divine understanding of their spiritual resources in Christ.

Ephesians 1:16–23 ESV

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, vs 16b

Paul not only was thankful but was also in prayer for the believers.

The grammar indicates that this was ongoing reality in Paul's life.

What was He praying for?

that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, vs 17

John Stott expressed it well:

‘What Paul does in Eph. 1, and therefore encourages us to copy, is both to keep praising God that in Christ all spiritual blessings are ours and to keep praying that we may know the fullness of what he has given us.

Paul prayed that God the Father of Glory, splendour might give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

There is much debate whether “the Spirit” refers to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit (an attitude or a disposition.)

I believe it refers to the HS.

1. The human spirit does not disclose the hidden mysteries of God

Ephesians 3:5 ESV

which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

2. The context of the book refers supports revelation is by Gods Spirit.

3. Grammatically whenever spirit is used as the predicate (its stating something about the subject) **of giving**, then it refers to the objective spirit whether divine or demonic example

Luke 11:13 ESV

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy

Spirit to those who ask him!"

John 3:34 ESV

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

Paul teaches the same truth in 1 Cor 2:6-16.

1 Corinthians 2:10 ESV

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

How can Paul pray for God to give them the HS when they already have the HS?

Paul is not praying they be given the HS, but rather for a specific manifestation of the HS, so that believers would have insight and know something of the mysteries as a result of the HS revelation.

may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him vs 17

Wisdom= GK means the capacity to understand and to act accordingly, the ability to utilise knowledge, experience with common sense and insight

Revelation= GK means to make fully known, to uncover, to take out of hiding,

The wisdom and revelation are defined as in the realm of His knowledge.

It's not merely facts about God, it includes knowledge of His will (Col 1:9), but more than that included relational and qualitative knowledge God.

John 17:3 ESV

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

So, it's a prayer that the HS would give them the capacity to understand and act accordingly the revelations of God and specifically personal and relational knowledge of God.

In summary

This is a request to understand, and to have the discernment to act and obey what has already been uncovered(revealed)

To know God, to understand His word and to obey it.

To fully grasp who they are and what they have in Christ.

Application

Many believers pursue some special revelation, something extra ordinary.

They want more blessings, more ecstatic experiences, when God had already blessed them with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places and when everything you and I need for life in Godliness is found in Christ.

2 Peter 1:3 ESV

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

You don't need more experiences.

You need a greater understanding of the resources you already have in Christ and a deeper grasp of your relationship with God.

Warren Wiersbe tells the story of how William Randolph Hearst once read of an extremely valuable piece of art, which he decided he must add to his extensive collection. He instructed his agent to scour the galleries of the world to find the masterpiece he was determined to have at any price. After many months of painstaking search, the agent reported that the piece already belonged to Mr. Hearst and had been stored in one of his warehouses for many years.

(MacArthur)

Your problem is not the lack of spiritual resources, but a lack of comprehension of them.

having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, vs 18

The eyes refer to the physical organ that allows light to travel to the brain.

Metaphorically it refers to the avenue through which light flows to the heart or mind.

The heart refers to the centre of a person, (to the seat of emotions, the cognitive ability of a person, the attitudes, the conscience and the will of a person.)

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, refers to an understanding of truths that impact the thinking, emotions and actions of a person at the very core of his being.

Grammatically in relation to the previous statement, Paul prays that God would give them this manifestation of the HS to have understanding and discernment to apply already unveiled truth, since their eyes of their hearts have been enlightened.

Restated:

Since their hearts have been changed to understand the truth, he prays that the HS will give them the ability to understand these truths.

Since they are saved, they have the HS, who can help them to understand God's resources for them in Christ.

Paul prays that the believers would fully grasp 3 things: vs 18-19

1. The Hope of His calling
2. The riches of His inheritance
3. the greatness of His power (let's explore them)

that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, vs 18

Hope you can define as a confident future expectation of good based on the promises of God.

Our hope comes from that fact that God chose you, and called you, meaning He saved you and restored your relationship with him.

The object of Hope focuses on the summing up, or uniting of all things in Christ (Eph 1:9-10)

Col states that your hope is laid up in heaven

Colossians 1:5 ESV

because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,

The gospel produces this kind of hope.

Colossians 1:23 ESV

if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Jesus indwelling the believer embodies Christian hope.

Colossians 1:27 ESV

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

If you are separated from Christ, Gods word states that you **have no hope** (no future expectation of good based upon Gods Word)

Ephesians 2:12 ESV

remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Application

If you die in this world as a believer, if you face difficult of trials, you have hope, hope of great future glory.

Romans 8:18 ESV

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Gods firm hope produces faith and secondly love.

Colossians 1:4–5 ESV

since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel,

Hope is a faith and love generator.

Since biblical hope is firm, it creates firm faith and frees you to sacrificially love others.

2ndly Paul prays for understanding vs 18

what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, vs 18?

Paul prayed they would understand the riches of **His glorious** inheritance in the saints.

Not.....the saint's inheritance, **His** inheritance, what **God will inherit**.

You are Gods glory displaying inheritance.

God thought of you before the foundation of this universe, before you even existed.

God thought of you reflecting His character, His glory

God thought of the complete adoption of you

God thought of releasing you from the bandages of sin and death in Christ

God thought of your part in His cosmic plan to unite all things in Christ

God thought of you being unsure of these truths and so he sealed you with the HS to give you sureness that you will in the end be His inheritance.

Through Jesus, God made it happen.

You belong to Him because He chose you, He made you, and He redeemed you through Christ death on the cross.

You are His radiant, shining, splendid inheritance.

Paul prays that you would comprehend something of this glorious truth.

Application

Why is that important?

It reminds you the believer, that you belong and God is thrilled about you.

You are His, belong to Him, you are part of His family which comes with all its privileges and benefits.

If you ever feel that you don't belong, as a believer, know this, that you are God's heritage.

Paul prayed you would understand this truth as well as ...

and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might vs 19

Paul wants the believers to understand greatness of that power towards us Gk= "into us" or "directed towards"

Paul piles up synonyms to emphasise the immensity of God's divine power, He exercises towards you as the believer.

- **Power**= GK dynamis= to be able, to exert force in performing a function, might or capacity, strength capability
- **working**= Gk energeian= operative or active power, energy, the state of being active, working operation, being active or functioning
- **Great**= GK Kratous= controlling power, the ability to express strength, power to rule or control
- **Might**= Gk ischyos= the quality required to do something, the physical qualities, the capabilities to function effectively, strength, the personal capability and strength.

Paul went on to illustrate the greatness of the power in 4 ways:

It's the power that:

1. raised Jesus from the dead
2. seated Jesus above all other powers
3. subjected all things under his feet
4. and gave him as the head over the church

Let's explore these areas a bit.

I. that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead vs 20

The extent of Gods power was demonstrated in raising Jesus from the dead.

No Scientist in the world has the power to raise someone from the dead, who has been dead after three days.

Notice Paul did not mention Christ death here because his focus is upon the power of God.

The cross is primarily connected with weakness, but the resurrection with power.

2 Corinthians 13:4 ESV

*For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God.
For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live
with him by the power of God.*

The term worked refers to the energy, the operative power of God that was used to raise Him from the dead.

Application

- Since God raised Jesus from the dead, you can know that He will raise you from the dead.
- Since He had the power to raise Christ, you grieve differently to the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 ESV

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

And in our present fears with the pandemic, we know that even if we do lose our lives, that we will return with Jesus to meet our loved ones in Christ.

II. and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. vs 20-21

2ndly connected with raising Christ from the dead, the magnitude of his power is seen in the exaltation of Christ to be at the right hand of the Father.

Christ **seated** there implies the victory he had over all His enemies.

In the Eastern world sitting at the right hand of the ruler, meant that you exercise the power on behalf of that ruler and exercised a position of supreme honour.

It also implied the defeat of all foes.

Psalm 110:1 ESV

The Lord says to my Lord:

*“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”*

1 Corinthians 15:24–26 ESV

Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Christ’s resurrection implied the defeat of sin, death and Satan with all his subjects in his kingdom.

The terms **far above** come from a Gk term which emphasises the superior status, of Christ position in this universe.

to every entity that has **authority, power** or dominion refers to all angelic beings, including Satan and His demons, including all world rulers and kingdoms

“Every name that was named” refers to the practice of calling on the name of the powers the people worshipped as deities, which was also foundational to practising magic

Christ exalted to the right hand of God the Father implies:

1. His enemies were defeated, and are subject to Christ
2. that He has all authority (the right to command and the power to enforce submission)
3. That He exercises the same power as God the Father, and has authority over all everything in this universe.

Gods power is infinitely superior to very created being, whether in the physical or spiritual realm, whether good or evil

God's power is displayed through exaltation of Christ

III. And he put all things under his feet vs 22

The psalmist writes

Psalm 8:6 ESV

*You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,*

In Gen 1:26-27 God gave man dominion of the living creatures on the earth.

The fall left the world in the dominion of the evil one.

The result of Christ being raised from the dead and being seated in the heavenly places is that everything has be subjected under Christ feet.

Gods power as displayed in Christ is demonstrated by His total dominion over everything in the cosmic universe.

He has the biggest gun, that why everything is under His control

Application

As a believer, you don't need to fear Satan or his demons.

You don't need to fear corrupt governmental rulers making bad decisions, because God is still ultimately in control.

The world may be in chaos, you may be terminally ill, but Jesus is still your refuge, your strength and He is calmly ruling everything.

Psalm 46:1-3 ESV

God is our refuge and strength,

a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way,

though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

though its waters roar and foam,

though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

You could summarise the bible and world history in two words.

Jesus wins.

IV. and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. vs 22

God's power is displayed in Jesus, who has is the head over all, who is in supreme authority over the universe (over both spiritual and physical realms).

God gave this Jesus to the church.

All the supremacy and power God gave Jesus, to be used on behalf of the church.

Implication: God sees the Church as playing a vital role in His grand plan for this cosmos.

Jesus is not only its head, but the church also is the fullness of Christ.

In the OT God's glorious presence was seen permeating creation but also specifically in the temple.

As Christ is filled with God, so His body is filled with Christ.

Colossians 1:19 ESV

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

Colossians 2:9 ESV

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

Application

Knowing how great His power is, means that you can confidently continue making disciples of all the nations, because Christ promised to be with you. Mt 28:18-20

It means that you can know ultimate the highest authority Jesus Christ,

- in your family
- in determining your roles as husband or wife
- in parenting,
- in job relationships
- in submitting to the government

It implies that in your battle with the demonic realm, your starting point is from delegated divine power.

Ephesians 6:10 ESV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

The Gk says it clearer, be strengthened, in other words yield to His power, not your power, but His.

Starting in Christ, means you start in a position of His infinite power.

It means that as you think about salvation, there is no unbeliever under power of the evil one, that can resist Gods power to make that person spiritually alive.

That should encourage your and my prayer lives as we pray for those who don't know Christ in our families.

God can save any person.

It means that nothing can remove you out of the hand of Christ.

John 10:27–29 ESV

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

As a believer you are eternally safe in the infinite powerful hands of Christ and God the Father.

May that truth give you great encouragement in these difficult times.

In conclusion

2 Truths to help you understand your resources in Jesus to walk like Him

1. You need to be in Christ to walk like Him, you need to be a believer to have the HS
2. You need divine help to walk like Him, to understanding the hope you have, that you're his glorious inheritance and the immensity of the power exercised towards the believer in His church.